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Star light, star bright

For those who stayed up late enough on Thursday, Mar. 23, they were treated to a spectacular display of northern lights dancing across the night sky in the Haliburton Highlands. /Submitted by Jay Callaghan, CalTek Design

Robinson's General Store back in business

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Editor

The iconic Robinson's General Store in the heart of Dorset will once again be opening its doors.

Joanne Robinson, the former owner of the business, took to the official Dorset public Facebook page on March 24 to deliver the news. The Robinson family had owned the establishment for 100 years, from 1921 to 2021, when it was sold to Mike and Katie

Hinbest. The couple ran into financial difficulties early into ownership, and as of January 8, 2023, the building was closed indefinitely.

"We were, like all of you, disappointed and devastated when we learned that our beloved Robinson's General Store closed in January," shared Robinson in her public statement on Facebook. "Since then, we have been working hard in the background to find a solution to allow the business to re-open."

With the closure of the store, many were left without access to basic necessities in the

Dorset area. "We understand the inconvenience this closure has caused the community and we thank you for your patience during this difficult time," said Robinson.

She took to the social media platform to introduce a new family in the ownership of Robinson's, led by brothers Ven Komina and Satya Jyesta, who will be assuming all operations moving forward.

Robinson noted that the brothers intend to open the doors in early April, based on the needs of the surrounding community. While the business will be open, she shared

that the overall operations will take "weeks and months" to complete. In the post, she requested that the public be patient and supportive during the time of transition.

"We look forward to the community welcoming the new people and giving them all the support they need to allow the store to thrive again," concluded Robinson in the public statement.

The post garnered over 800 likes and nearly 400 shares across the platform, with well-wishes streaming in from Facebook users.

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According to the MNRF, water levels in the Gull and Burnt River watersheds are lower than previous years. /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

Water levels below average for this time of year

by EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

It’s the time of year when folks are waiting with bated breath to see if levels across the Burnt and Gull River watersheds will rise.

Kris Windover, the IRM Technical Specialist from the

Minden Field Office at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, shared that while the future can never be guaranteed, the pace at which the thaw is taking place this year seems promising.

“Water levels throughout the reservoir lakes in Burnt and Gull River watersheds are average for this time of year, and gradually filling with local run-off, snow melt and precipitation,” he shared with the *Times*.

He noted that while levels along local rivers seem to be slightly below average for this time of year, they are steadily increasing with precipitation. Windover says that while the accuracy for predicting precipitation is only good two to three days out, the remaining days of March are shaping up to be cooler than average seasonal temperatures. While the weather

is subject to change, “minimal melt is anticipated over this time period,” shared Windover.

Due to the fact that it’s been a fairly mild winter overall, the snowpack across the Burnt and Gull River watersheds is trending at average to below average.

Windover shared with the *Times* that the forecast over the next two weeks indicates that there is minimal precipitation expected, but of course this is subject to change at any time.

“Daily observations of weather, water flows, and snow conditions are conducted to make informed water management decisions,” says Windover. For those interested in tracking the water levels and for information on flood preparedness and local and provincial flood messaging, you can visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/flood>.

CORRECTION

Please note that in the March 22 edition of the *Times*, in the story “A clean slate for a new adventure” featuring Greenscapes Haliburton, the incorrect number was listed. The correct contact for Greenscapes is 705-455-7725.

Haliburton County adopts shoreline bylaw

by JAMES MATTHEWS
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

It’s all over but the wait. That’s where Haliburton County is at regarding its new Shoreline Preservation Bylaw that will come into effect April 1. That bylaw will replace the current Shoreline Tree Preservation Bylaw.

County council officially adopted the new rules March 22 during its regular meeting.

Stephen Stone, the county’s planning director, spent the past number of weeks shopping the amended bylaw to lower-tier municipalities. The amendment was necessary because Dysart et al. refused to cede jurisdiction of its shoreline to county authority.

So the new bylaw will apply to Minden Hills, Algonquin Highlands, and Highlands East. The Shoreline Tree Preservation Bylaw will continue in Dysart.

Whatever Dysart decides to do in way of protecting its shorelines, Warden Liz Danielsen, who is also mayor of Algonquin Highlands, said she hopes it dovetails with the county’s efforts.

“The closer that we can align our directions, the better to reduce any conflict,” she said.

Councillor Murray Fearrey, Dysart’s mayor, said his township will work to mirror as closely as possible what the county does to protect shorelines.

“But we have some different slants on it, obviously,” he said. “One of them is the way we collect money. I just want to make sure that we’re not tied to the Provincial Offences Act because I know how it works. It doesn’t work.”

Fearrey asked about how the fines for infractions of the Shoreline Tree Preservation Bylaw came to be approved.

Stone said the county presented the fine structure to the provincial court for approval by a judge. Something similar will have to be done regarding the fines under the Shoreline Protection Bylaw.

“With the approval of (the shoreline) bylaw by council today, we’ll actually prepare a submission to the courts to get a fine structure established,” he said.

Should they get a violation after the bylaw comes into effect in April and before there’s a judicially approved fine structure, Stone said the offender will be summoned to court to answer for the violation.

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HHHS continues work to bring IT system online after attack

by JAMES MATTHEWS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Work is still underway to correct the cybersecurity issues that caused a Code Grey at Haliburton Highlands Health Services facilities in February.

HHHS declared an information technology Code Grey in Feb. 5 because of a third-party incident outside the HHHS. The incident hindered staff's access to the integrated information technology system shared with Ross Memorial Hospital (RMH).

The affected systems were taken offline, and HHHS' IT team and RMH are working to bring all systems back online.

"Significant progress has been made thanks to this hard work and the support of regional partners as well as third-party cybersecurity experts," Carolyn Plummer, the president and CEO of HHHS, said in her March report to board members.

"Cyber defence infrastructure has also been updated to reduce the risk of re-occurrence of any similar incidents.

"Given the complexity of the situation and its impacts, HHHS continues to anticipate that it may be a number of weeks before operations return to normal."

Health care facilities under the umbrella of HHHS have been gearing up for Accreditation 2023. The IT Code Grey and its fallout prevent some staff from accessing emails. That impacted response to a staff Work Life Pulse Survey launched in late January.

"With the challenges some staff experienced accessing their emails during the early part of the IT Code Grey, the deadline has been extended to the end of April and staff are reminded to complete the survey as soon as they are able," Plummer said.

HHHS received a short-term reprieve from the financial pressures faced by Ontario health care providers.

Staffing pressures and vacancies are ex-

pected to continue. As are rising operational costs for utilities, fuel, raw food, maintenance, transportation, and medical supplies.

HHHS' negative run rate against the budget is running at a similar pace. But outstanding receivables from the Ministry of Health were settled in December and January, which has slightly alleviated some cash flow pressure in the short term.

Plummer said HHHS continues to monitor our payment terms to maximize the use of cash.

"HHHS has communicated its ongoing deficit position and provided a nursing agency pressure funding request to Ontario Health East, which resulted in receiving an additional \$350,000 in funding for these pressures," she said.

"In total, HHHS has received \$631,000 in one-time operating pressure funding, which is quite similar in total dollars to the prior year, as well as \$106,200 in new COVID-19 prevention and containment funding."

Preparations are underway for the audit process as the fiscal year is drawing to a close at the end of March.

The staffing situation at HHHS, like other hospitals and health care organizations in Ontario, remains a significant challenge, impacting both day-to-day operations and longer-term planning.

The COVID-19 virus continues to circulate, and as of March 27, HHHS has only just declared that the COVID-19 outbreak in the In-patient Department of the Haliburton Hospital is over. There were a total of five patient cases and three staff cases during the outbreak, which was declared by the HHHS Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Department on March 20, 2023.

Patients currently in isolation will remain in isolation until March 29, 2023. Regular visiting guidelines (up to 2 visitors at a time) will resume on March 30, 2023, with active screening of all visitors for symptoms of

COVID-19. Admissions have resumed and enhanced cleaning remains in place.

HHHS will continue to maintain important IPAC measures that have been in place, including full Personal Protective Equipment and mandatory masking in all patient care areas, mandatory vaccination, and active screening for symptoms of COVID-19.

Enhanced cleaning will now also be conducted in the In-patient Department, and staff will continue to monitor themselves

for symptoms. Services in the Haliburton Emergency Department were unaffected by this outbreak, and community members in need of emergency care should not hesitate to seek assistance.

"As the cold and flu season draws to a close, it will be important for staff and community members to be aware that the virus remains a threat, and to be thoughtful about precautions," Plummer said.



Dino diving

Sir Sam's Ski/Ride annual Spring Splash took place on a snowy Saturday afternoon at Eagle Lake where dozens of skiers and snowboarders sent winter out with a splash. Brave souls, many dressed in costumes, ripped down the slope before attempting to hydroplane across a large pool of water in front of Sir Sam's chalet. Contestants were judged on best costume, wipeout, and best crossing. /ADAM FRISK special to the Times

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Half Load weight restrictions are placed on roadways and posted each year in the spring for approximately 1-2 months. Persons contravening this regulation will be prosecuted under Section 122 of The Highway Traffic Act. Please watch for and obey posted signage.

NOTICE: PUBLIC MEETING - PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TOWNSHIP'S FEES AND CHARGES BY-LAW

Take notice that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills will be holding a Public Meeting on Thursday, March 30, 2023, during its Regular Council Meeting regarding Proposed changes to the Township's Fees and Charges By-law.

The meeting will commence at 9:00 AM in the Council Chambers located at 7 Milne Street, Minden ON.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING – BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

Take Notice there will be a Special Meeting of Council held Friday, March 31, 2023, at 9:00 AM in the Council Chambers, located at 7 Milne Street, Minden, ON.

The purpose of the Special Meeting is to continue the 2023 Budget Deliberations.

DAYTIME BURNING & FIREWORKS REMINDER

Reminder that you will need a burn permit for daytime burning, 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM from April 1st to October 31st, and fireworks permit for the ignition of fireworks. A burn permit is issued for the season. Visit our website at mindenhills.ca for current fees. Contact the Fire Department for fireworks permit prior to the ignition of fireworks at 705-286-1202.

FOOD WASTE REDUCTION

According to a waste audit conducted in the summer of 2022, 57% of Minden Hills garbage is food waste. And over 50% of that food waste is avoidable (leftovers, loaves of bread, expired meat, etc.). To help us improve, focus on meal planning, preparing only what you need and doing all you can to ensure foods that could be eaten are not wasted.

(VIRTUAL) COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted with a hybrid model of in-person and electronic participation in accordance with the Municipal Act. Members of the Public will participate electronically, until further notice. Meetings begin at 9:00 AM unless otherwise noted. The schedule of upcoming meetings are:

March 30 – Regular Council Meeting

March 31 – Special Council Meeting – 2023 Budget Deliberations

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by joining a live-stream link available on the township CivicWeb Portal at mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx or by using the direct link provided in the notice. Meeting agendas are not displayed during the meeting; please download by visiting our CivicWeb Portal at mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx. Please note the live stream file/video will be available to the public for the duration of one week after the Council Meeting.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

When bringing ashes from your woodstove or fireplace to the Scotch Line Landfill Site please ensure that the ashes are cooled prior to transport and disposal.

IMPORTANT LANDFILL CARD INFORMATION

Don't recycle your current Landfill Card, blue in colour, valid from May 1, 2021-April 30, 2023, it has been extended to the end of December 2023.

Cancelled events choke economic return

by **JAMES MATTHEWS**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

At least one Minden Hills business owner laments the loss of community events and is wary of the possible economic effects to the township.

Molly McInerney is the owner of Molly's Bistro Bakery. She penned a letter to town council for its March 9 public meeting. She expressed her concerns about the direction Minden's Department of Community Services seems to have taken recently regarding planned events.

"It seems every time I turn around they are quashing or cutting back events in our community," McInerney said. The Coby Island Hockey Tournament has taken place for 42 years during Easter weekend, and Minden businesses have benefited from it for many of those years, she said.

That's until the decision was made last year to relocate the tourney to nearby Haliburton. The reason for the move was to provide playoff ice time for the Haliburton County Huskies of the Ontario Junior Hockey League.

"Probably never to be seen in Minden

again," McInerney said. "Last Easter weekend, our beautiful community was like a ghost town and Haliburton was bursting at the seams with activity."

She said the move didn't show sound economic planning. There were no OJHL play-off games over Easter weekend, so the Coby Island tournament could have been accommodated in Minden, she said.

There are other examples of cancelled events.

"Our Canada Day celebrations have been the envy of the county for years," McInerney said. "We have this amazing major event that has been an annual tradition for hundreds of families from all over the county for decades."

A big part of the country's local birthday celebration has been the Crazy Raft Race, which had been cancelled last year. She said there were insurance concerns that scuttled the raft race. How, after hosting the event for years, did insurance concerns sound the race's death knell last year?

"I'm worried that no race will result in fewer people attending and less new visitors to our town and less money being spent," McInerney said.

Councillor Tammy McKelvey said she wasn't on the town's council last year when the decision to axe the Crazy Raft Race was made. She, too, wondered why something couldn't have been worked out insurance-wise.

"Can we go to another insurance company or can we look at other options?" McKelvey said. "Communities are doing these sorts of things on water. I too have concerns with the things that we've had here that are leaving."

Trisha McKibbin, the township's CAO and council clerk, said the municipality can reach out to its insurance broker to see if any policy avenues exist to accommodate the event's return.

McKibbin said another option could be in third-party organizations getting coverage by way of their own insurance carriers.

"I would not recommend that the municipality deliver this event without having insurance, if we were the operators of the event," McKibbin said. "But that would be a decision of council."

Coun. Pam Sayne said she's spoken to staff about the loss of the Crazy Raft Race.

"I am so assured they are pulling on every angle and string they can to try to make

this happen and realize how central this is," Sayne said. "They are doing everything they can."

Mayor Bob Carter surmised that perhaps a community group or one of the service clubs could sponsor the Crazy Raft Race. He said such an organization could get insurance more easily than the municipality for such an event.

"Our insurance was cancelled," Carter said. "Not at the last minute, but we didn't have much time when they told us no before we could react."

Carter said the pickings are slim of carriers that provide municipal insurance. And those that are have become stricter "on virtually everything," he said. "This is going to continue to be an issue."

McInerney said Minden Hills needs to get back on track before another community makes moves that claim the audience.

"When I opened Molly's Bistro Bakery, Minden was the place where things were happening," she said. "The community service department was involved and engaged in the community. There was an event or activity almost every weekend."

HHHS makes its case for CT machine

by **JAMES MATTHEWS**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Haliburton Highlands Health Services will lobby the Ministry of Health as the next step toward getting a CT scan machine for the region.

A recent study by the health service to gauge the feasibility of bringing such a piece of equipment to the region netted positive results, said Carolyn Plummer, the CEO and president at HHHS in her March report to board members.

"We were overwhelmed with the volume of support letters we received, with over 100 letters received in just over a week and

a half, even without a formal public call for support," she said.

"This clearly speaks to the importance of having a CT scan machine in Haliburton County."

The equipment will greatly improve access to critical diagnostic information and provide a local option for screening and preventative diagnostic testing.

"While HHHS is well-aware of the potential positive benefits from a health care perspective, community members have been able to share how important it is to them, and the potential it has to transform our local health care services and experiences," she said.

As the application process begins, Plummer said HHHS will continue to share information with the community about the benefits of a local CT scan machine.

Thanks to the integration with the Diagnostic Imaging Department at Ross Memorial Hospital, scans can be read by an off-site radiologist. Those results can be communicated back to physicians in the county.

"This is similar to how our X-ray, ultrasound, and bone density scans happen now," she said. "It is common practice at many small hospitals across the province and is common practice at many larger hospitals after-hours."

Offering scans closer to home will reduce the number of out-of-county transfers completed by the local EMS, who transported 357 people for CT scans in 2021. That tally is a 55 per cent increase over 2020.

Plummer said it will also support the ongoing recruitment and retention efforts, as they know new physicians are trained with the expectation that they will have easy access to CT scan equipment for diagnostic purposes.

Letters of support for the application can be sent to Michel Henry at mhenry@hhhs.ca.

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Looking fresh for spring

Up River Trading Co. owner Paul Roy stands behind the newly installed countertop at the Minden location of the shop. Roy worked with a series of local contractors to bring the vision to life, and to offer a better shopping experience to visitors. /EMILY STONEHOUSE Staff

Public health needs funding injection

by JAMES MATTHEWS
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Dealing with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the coronavirus' evolution is a business case of sorts that illustrates the need for more provincial support of regional public health agencies.

David Marshall, board of health chairperson for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, said in a letter to Premier Doug Ford that investing in public health infrastructure will ultimately save the provincial health care system money.

The letter was written as the health board's input for the 2023 provincial budget. It was forwarded to Haliburton County council and included as part of the March 22 meeting agenda package.

Traditionally, just two per cent of the annual provincial health care funding has gone to public health infrastructure. The pandemic has shown how important public health resources are to protecting communities. It's also shown that two per cent of the health budget falls short of the needs.

"Since 2020, the provincial government has provided boards of health with one-time funding to support the ongoing work of responding to COVID-19," Marshall wrote.

That money had to be stretched to cover outbreak management, surveillance and data management, COVID-19 immunization clinics, vaccine storage and handling support for COVID-19 vaccines, public and health-care provider communication and education, and supporting infection prevention and control in highest-risk settings.

"Due to the one-time nature of this funding, however, we are unable to recruit and retain the qualified health profes-

sionals required to ensure the sustainability of these supports," he wrote. "This means that we continually need to draw on permanent staff from other program areas."

That staff redeployment contributes to backlogs in other programs.

Marshall said it's become clear over the last year that the coronavirus will need a long-term public health response.

He said the province needs to provide boards of health with increased permanent base funding to ensure capacity to support the public health response associated with COVID-19 added to the list of Diseases of Public Health Significance.

Permanent money is needed for Infection Prevention and Control Hubs and to support the boards of health School Focused Nurses Initiative.

"Boards of Health have yet to receive any funding to address the backlog of public health services that were created through the course of the pandemic," Marshall wrote. "This is equivalent to the often-cited list of delayed surgeries in the acute care system."

He urged the province to include a one-time financial contribution to alleviate the backlog.

Preventing illness is one way to lessen the burden on the health care system and, Marshall said, that's the bread-and-butter of public health agencies.

"Continuing to fund boards of health at pre-COVID-19 levels means that we will be unable to adequately respond to emerging concurrent public health crises," he said.

Before the pandemic, the provincial government announced a decrease in the grant contribution for cost-shared programs to a 70-30 ratio. For the region's health unit, that change meant a loss of about \$1.2 million. The province has provided mitigation funding since 2020 because of the pandemic.

“

Continuing to fund boards of health at pre-COVID-19 levels means that we will be unable to adequately respond to emerging concurrent public health crises.

— DAVID MARSHALL, BOARD OF HEALTH

”

Had that change gone ahead, health boards would not have been able to meet the challenges of COVID-19, he said.

Boards had to divert 60 per cent to 90 per cent of their base resources to pandemic response in 2020 and 2021. Should mitigation funding cease, this would amount to a significant cut in base budget resources.

"On the heels of a global public health emergency, in which there remains significant uncertainty regarding the emergence of new variants of concern, cutting board of health budgets would weaken local public health infrastructure at a time that it is needed most," Marshall said.

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No news

WHOEVER FIRST uttered the phrase “no news is good news” clearly did not write for the newspaper.

During these slush-laden days of March, it’s a transient chapter. A shift in mindset, and a hinge that holds together the last breaths of winter and the early blinks of spring.

And ending with a beginning. It’s a quiet time of year. Now this isn’t to say that there is nothing happening. I am forever in awe of the gumption that’s prevalent in the hearts of Highlanders. There’s always something on the go.

But this past week, the news didn’t fall on our laps. There was an absence of action in the world, a break in the bustle overall.

The silence made me uneasy.

After three full years of sitting on-edge, the stillness felt foreign.

News happens fast. Particularly over these past three COVID-heavy years; when the bulk of society has

survived in a state of constant fight or flight. The news that did roll out was unpredictable. I have a vivid recollection of scouring newspapers in March of 2020, looking for answers on a subject that was entirely new to me, to everyone. What is it? How do we fix this? When will it end?

Once we found our footing for how to report on COVID, we moved on to survival. How do we support one another? How do we move forward? What’s next?

Then, there came a chapter of animosity. Maskers versus unmaskers, some folks believing their rights were infringed, others trying to protect their loved ones in any way they could. More questions, fewer answers; all unraveling like a

never-ending pool of thread.

While we waded through the unknown, the world continued to spin. Wars broke out, weather patterns changed, strife never stalled. News continued flowing as steadily as the Gull River in early-spring.

Through it all, there were glimmers of good stories shining through the cracks of a society we were trying to rebuild. Businesses supporting one another, events trepidatiously tiptoeing forward, life feeling a semblance of “normalcy” once again.

In three years, there has been no shortage of news.

And now we can look back at a world we have survived in. A world that carries its weight differently. A world that holds on to the inkling of fear; the possibility that it could all crumble in the palms of our sanitizer-soaked hands once again.

News can tie us together. It can unite us. It can cause fear. It can offer hope. It can

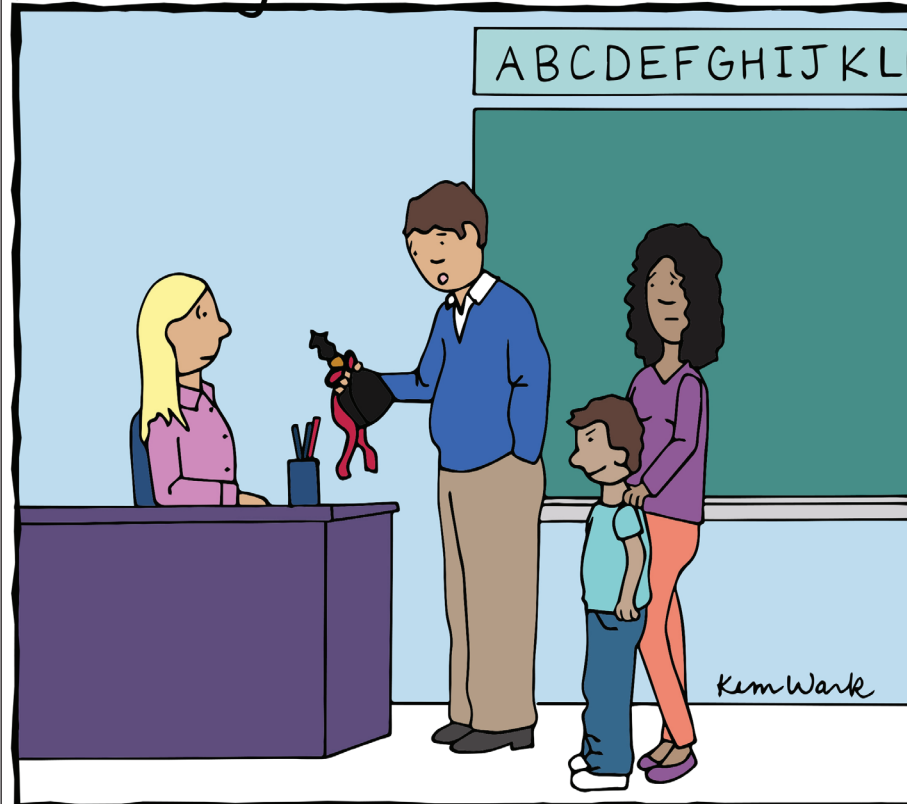
change lives. But this week, the news took a break. This week, the occurrence that wove our separate lives together, were the lights that beamed above the Highlands. Wisps of pinks, dashes of green, zig-zags of blue, echos of white. The Northern Lights danced over the local skies while Highlanders from across the county craned their necks to snap photos, posting them on social media for all to see. An experience that was felt by everyone, whether they were night-owls or not.

In a world that’s sat in the news of fear, of fight, of flight, for three years, that shared moment of magic felt like a long-time coming. So maybe, every so often, no news really is good news.



EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

Kwarky



“We’ve tried ignoring your emails and calls.
Please accept this gift and stop contacting us.”

Spring is for sighs

I KNOW VERY few people who do not welcome spring in one way or another – and outdoorsy folks are no different. Most of us are looking forward to open water trout fishing, or turkey or bear hunting opportunities. But, of all the outdoors people who welcome spring, I think it is the new winter campers that must welcome it most – albeit very quietly.

I am not talking about the old guard winter campers – the ones who were doing it long before social media ever took hold. Those people do it quietly and love winter camping for its own sake. Strange, I know. But props to them.

No, I am talking about the newbie winter campers who got into it recently because, as influencers, they understood that the idea of winter camper would give them more interesting content. These folks are the ones who are looking for the views online, rather than the views outside of the hot tent.

Don’t get me wrong, I’m not saying that winter camping is unappealing to them. But I will say they might have got into it for the wrong reasons. They may have, for instance, after watching *Frozen*, had a romantic notion of what it is like to sleep outside in frigid conditions. And, as influencers, probably wanted to take their followers along on this exciting journey, so they too would know what it feels like to live inside a freezer.

What they likely didn’t know is that winter camping is one of those things that grows on you slowly over time – like icicles. And with that growth comes the growing pains that newcomers to the activity must endure.

The old school winter campers have spent years experimenting and have come

to realize their limitations, found the most reliable and practical gear, developed an understanding of where to set up a tent, know what the conditions require, what food to bring along, and how to keep warm in general. (The answer to the latter is to stuff as many sled dogs as possible into your sleeping bag.) They know how thick a layer of pine boughs to pile up under their sleeping area, how to keep their tent woodstoves stoked and running all night and how to keep a positive mindset that makes them think that winter camping is “fun.”

If you are new to the pastime, you will slowly learn these things the hard way, while you are smiling at the camera, and talking over the sound of chattering teeth.

Once spring arrives, however, my bet is that some of those folks are secretly thankful that they have one winter behind them – and are maybe now fans of global warming.

You see, winter camping is sort of like childbirth. If you remembered the pains associated with the last time, you might not do it again. Plus, I know very little about either.

Nevertheless, I think it is something everyone should try.

I did it once for a four-day stint, which is why I still celebrate my furnace’s birthday every year.

This is why I feel sorry for those influencers who purchased winter camping gear and then felt an obligation to endorse it and share their experiences.

It is also why I assume spring couldn’t come soon enough for them.

Oh sure, they probably won’t admit it. But I bet right now they are breathing a sigh of relief. And planning their next winter camping excursion – in Hawaii.



STEVE GALEA
Beyond 35

IN OTHER WORDS

Columns and Letters to the Editor

Worrying about the Frost Centre

I'm getting dark, worried feelings about the Frost Centre on Highway 35 just south of Dorset.

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) bought the 40-acre site and its 21 buildings from the Ontario government just over two years ago. The union paid \$3.2 million and planned to use it as a training-recreation site for its members.

At the time of the purchase union executives said they had "a duty to preserve the property's integrity" and to reinvigorate the Centre.



JIM POLING SR.

From Shaman's Rock

"We've got a huge opportunity but also a real duty here," union treasurer Eddy Almeida said at the time.

The Centre has sat empty and unused since and now is the focus of legal actions. Some OPSEU executives who handled the purchase no longer are in charge and are being sued by the union.

Also, a contractor hired by the union to do repairs at the Centre is suing OPSEU and is seeking \$2.5 million in damages.

Now the union has appointed "a project team to consider options for the Frost Centre."

I'm worrying about what the "options" might be.

OPSEU has a mess on its hands. It spent \$3.2 million and got nothing for it over two years except more expenses. It has had to heat the main buildings, provide maintenance, keep some areas lighted, plow the entrance drives, plus pay lawyers handling the law suits.

What worries me is that the union's project review team will recommend a quick and least painful way out of the mess. Find a low-offer buyer, recover part of your losses and get on with your real purpose, which is looking out for the interests of your 180,000 members.

A low-offer sale likely would be to a capital-driven organization looking to make money building cottage-homes along the Centre's 2,800 feet of St. Nora Lake shoreline. The Ontario government rejected one such bid when it sold the property to OPSEU.

Another possibility is that the package will be sold to a company that would turn the site into a major resort complex.

St. Nora, like many other local lakes, is suffering from warming and human activity. Another couple dozen cottage-homes along a shoreline that has been preserved for decades will worsen the situation.

Kushog Lake, which connects to St. Nora Lake also would be affected.

The Frost Centre began as a ranger station in 1921. In 1944 the Ontario government and the University of Toronto forestry faculty partnered to create a place for training government personnel and university students. It became the Ontario Forest Technical Training School, then an outdoor education centre dedicated to environmental and resource management education.

For more than 100 years the Frost Centre has been all about the environment and education.

I recall vividly the times when busloads of children were brought to the Frost facilities to be taken on hikes, visit the historic old saw mill, and see a sugar bush operation. Later they have a meal of pancakes and fresh maple syrup. A lot of these were city kids with little understanding of the real outdoors.

OPSEU owns the Frost Centre and presumably has the right to do with it whatever it chooses.

The population of Haliburton Highlands is growing fast, and will grow even faster in coming years. There will be a need for more cottage-homes opportunities, more commercial activity.

But my hope is that the union will do the right thing and recognize the Frost Centre's history and the value in retaining the site as a place to learn about and better understand nature.

I also hope that OPSEU will remember its early statements about having a duty to preserve the property's integrity and to work closely with the people of Haliburton County.

Various county individuals and groups made their feelings known to the government when it decided to close, then sell the Frost Centre. I hope they will do the same with OPSEU and its review committee.

The Frost Centre is a difficult and complex situation. I hope a lot of people will become involved in helping OPSEU find an acceptable solution.



Gordon Pinsent photographed by Fred Phipps.

He came from away

Gordon Pinsent was most believable in every character that he portrayed - be it Sir Sam Hughes, the well-known army general originally from Clarington, Ontario, but indelibly attached to Haliburton due to the large retreat he once owned in the region - or as a concerned farmer, politician, or other interesting character.

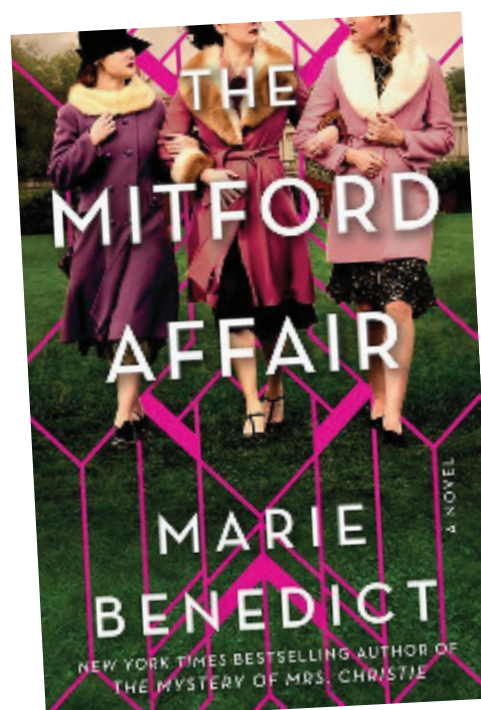
To work with Mr. Pinsent on a photo assignment (as I had the good fortune to on many occasions), or to meet him on the street, he was always the helpful, friendly nextdoor neighbour. Born in Newfoundland, before it became a part of Canada, it could be said that he came from away to enter Canada.

When Canada united with Newfoundland we not only attained the gift of such a beautiful land, but the many talented, caring, thoughtful people within it - like Gordon Pinsent. He quickly became a most popular and admired Canadian in his new found land. He achieved numerous awards for his craft during his lengthy career, and even more lasting friendships and admirers the world-over. In life's theatre, he became an icon.

Gordon, you will be missed by many. Thank you for all that you shared.

Fred Phipps, Special to the Times

HCPL's Book of the Week



Between the World Wars, the six Mitford sisters dominate the English political, literary, and social scenes. Though they've weathered scandals before, the family falls into disarray when two of the sisters become spies for the Nazi party. Probing the torrid political climate of World War II and the ways that sensible people can be sucked into radical action, *The Mitford Affair* follows one sister's valiant efforts to end the war and the cost of placing loyalty to her country above loyalty to her family.

The Mitford Affair by Marie Benedict is available to borrow from the Haliburton County Public Library.

CURLING IN THE HIGHLANDS

Former Red Hawk continues to soar

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Editor

It's up up and away for Jacob Dobson as he continues his streak of significant curling wins. On March 19, the young athlete won gold at the Canadian College national competition in Sudbury. This accolade is added to his recent wins of the Canadian Junior Cup, the Swiss Junior Cup, and the Ottawa Valley Curling Association Superspiel. And that's just from this season.

Dobson won his first provincial title as a Red Hawk. "Ever since I started curling, I've dreamt about winning a Canadian title," he said. "It still feels surreal to think now I have."

The Haliburton County local is currently studying at Humber College, and specializing in justice studies. Through the many competitions, he noted that his roots are always tied back to the Haliburton Highlands. "It takes years of building up to these events," he said, "all of which started back in Haliburton with the Youth Curling Program."

Dobson intends to keep pushing forward with the sport in any way he can. "With the college side, I have a few more seasons of eligibility and hope to go back and defend our CCAA [Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association] title," he said.

He noted that by winning the CCAA this past year, the team earned a spot at the Pointsbet Invitational. The event - held in Oakville next September - is one of the largest curling events in the country.

While the awards seem to come naturally to Dobson and his team, the sport takes a tremendous amount of dedication, perseverance, and energy. "This season my teams have focused on spending a lot of time in the gym with our personal trainers and working with our sports psychologists," shared Dobson. He also noted that there is an abundance of time on the road for the game, sharing that the final game of the past tournament was his 78th game of the season.

Dobson encouraged others to get into the sport, noting



Jacob Dobson as skip and the men's curling team from Humber College won gold at the Canadian College national competition in Sudbury on March 19. /Photo submitted

that while it may not always be easy, he believes it's always worth it. "My biggest suggestion for people just getting into the sport of curling is to make sure you have fun playing, and practice makes perfect," he said.

When asked about next steps, Dobson alluded to the journey ahead. "I will continue to compete on the competitive men's circuit, more details will be released publicly later," he shared.

While he continues to forge ahead, Dobson still makes the

time to celebrate the successes along the way. "This team has put in so much work, and the success we've found this season, especially winning the CCAA gold, helps to make all that work feel even more worth it," he said.

For more curling content, including features on other HHSS alumni who competed in the CCAA Curling Championships, see next week's Times.

Sweep Into Spring at Minden Curling Club

On March 17 and 18 we held our first hugely successful Ladies Bonspiel since Covid hit in March 2020. Teams came from Dundas, Huntsville and Thornhill to join nine local Minden Curling Club teams. The event has been taking place for over 25 years and has become a "Girls' Weekend". Visiting teams enjoyed the local B&B rentals and shops in town.

The event started on Friday evening with one game, followed by Karaoke which is always a big hit! Saturday had two games, followed by dinner and prizes. The entire event was organized and run by our wonderful volunteer members, "The Men In Black". This year's theme was "Alien Invasion" and the costumes were amazing. The prizes for the costumes

were donated by the event sponsor Lynda Litwin at RE/MAX Professionals North.

The raffle table was stupendous this year with many donations from local businesses from Minden, Haliburton, Carnarvon and Norland as well as many member donations including several wood creations from Dave Millington.

We want to thank all of our donors for their generosity and remind everyone to shop local as they support the community.

This year we had a special donation of an oil painting by Minden's own John Lennard.

The painting was won by Karen Roberts, a Minden curler.

Submitted by Ed Copeland of the Minden Curling Club



The second place winners of the Sweep Into Spring Ladies Bonspiel. /Photo submitted



Allison Mallette's Minden team won the best costume prize at the Sweep Into Spring Ladies Bonspiel that was held at the Minden Curling Club on March 17 and 18. /Photo submitted

The Conundrum of Caring II – failure to launch

I HAVE SEVERAL friends the age of my children or thereabouts who are hunched over Excel sheets trying to figure out how to make their money stretch between their children's education, their own living costs, supporting their parents' living situation, and saving for their own old age. I see women of that age cohort looking a decade older than their years as they integrate senior care into their middle-aged years: sharing their homes or racing down the road to supervise parents in separate settings, managing the myriad of medical obligations, negotiating the sharing of responsibility among the siblings and in-laws, and maybe, if they're lucky, a devoted neighbour or friend. The thought bubble over the heads of the women – maybe men, too, I don't know -- is:



FAY MARTIN
Poke, Peel, Pair, Ponder

When – if ever -- will my life belong to me?

Used to be you kinda knew: never. Caregiving was forever: kids supplanted by husbands (maybe wives – sorry for being genderist), grandchildren, elders. And that wasn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, not caring for someone was the definition of not being part of society and a thing to be pitied, perhaps, but in any case compensated for. These were the all-purpose maiden aunts of Victorian days (think of Anne Elliot of Jane Austin's *Persuasion*, a spinster, marvellously competent and taken for granted, at age 27) and outdated house staff (think of Stevens the butler, played by Anthony Hopkins, and his aged father with the nasal drip serving drinks, in *Remains of the Day*). In the rural community of my childhood, they were the bachelors invited to the family Christmas table, the recipients of food packages, the checked-upon in troubled times or if they'd gone silent.

So how and when did caring become the thing that sucked your soul rather than replenished it? I think it took root when neo-liberalism decreed that money was the only measure of value. Mark Carney captures it in *Value(s): Building a Better World for All*, when he brought his experience and brilliance to assessing the mechanism by which the market economy became the market society. He identifies 'fairness between the generations, in the distribution of income and of life chances' as the three components of any good society (that's quoted from Will Hutton's March 21/21 review in *The*

Guardian; I admit I didn't get beyond the first chapter of *Value(s)* – it almost broke my nose when it collapsed during a moment of inattention while being read in bed – but I am nevertheless a fan).

Fairness between the generations is mostly referenced in relation to environmental and economic concerns, but I think it applies equally to social concerns, specifically the impact of prolonged dependence at the beginning and end of life. Those dependencies are fueled, I believe, by the inexorable appetite for more more more that is inherent in capitalism and pervades our lives. It makes some sense in the early stages of life – how can hunger for the fullness of life be a bad thing? (well, it can – the 'how' is the thing). But in the last stage of life? Doesn't have the same sweet smell.

In fact, it has a distinctly musty smell, a best-before smell. I don't want my care as a senior to cost more than day care or post-secondary education or, god forbid, the roof over my head. If there is to be Carney's fairness between the generations, the middle generation shouldn't be having to balance the well-being of the generations against each other. They should be mutually beneficial.

The Indigenous cultures seem to have captured that balance rather better than the Judeo-Christian philosophy, which, ya gotta admit, doesn't paint elders in a very good light. Fathers are pretty hard on their sons (think Jesus), and daughters (think Lot – that's a very twisted story), and wives (pretty much all of 'em), and I can't bring to mind an elder female. Sarah, maybe; she had to wait until she was 90 to fulfill her duty of spawning a nation for her husband. Not my idea of what good looks like.

Indigenous cultures, in contrast, start with Mother Earth, tend to be matriarchal, and see death as an integral part of the life cycle. Harold Johnson, in *The Power Story: on Truth, the Trickster, and New Fictions for a New Era*, explains that the phrase 'Today is a good day to die' refers not to death, but to living each day as if it were your last. I think that puts death in the proper perspective. Guards against prolonging it for no good reason.

Death is the end of living. I can live with that.

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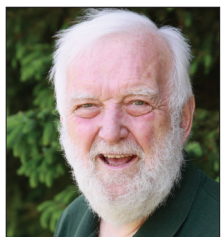
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And then there were four

LURKING IN the mist of municipal politics, like the warning on the passenger side, rear view mirror, it emerges: “the idea may be closer than it appears”, to the delight of some and abject terror to others. I, of course, refer to the prospect of single tier government for Haliburton County.

It is a concept that some say has been kicking around for decades. The idea received an infusion of fresh energy when the local politicians danced up to the idea, but did not allow the moment to be consummated over 20 years ago.



JACK BREZINA
Jack's POV

The provincial government enacted legislation which came into effect January 1, 2001, that slashed the number of individual municipalities in the county from ten to four.

Looking back, it is difficult to imagine that some municipal government responsibilities covered just a single township....

Lutterworth, Snowdon, Monmouth, and Glamorgan among others. Each with a permanent population to close to 1000 had its own clerk, tax collector, road department, etc. not to mention its own council of elected politicians.

It brings to mind attending Stanhope Township meetings and passing a wooden bas relief carving of a much earlier imagined Stanhope Township council in session depicting participants pointing, straining to make their point and some sitting back their faces seemingly reflecting resignation, frustration or perhaps bemusement. Spectators, equally animated, looked on. (That carving, presented by Cecil and Jean Irwin, is still on display to the Algonquin Highlands municipal office entrance way.)

Fast forward to the Mike Harris take over at Queen's Park and economics, “common sense” and pressure from the provincial overlords which caught up with these endearing, but quaint vestiges of people power. An agreement was struck to amalgamate, but not quite a complete amalgamation. Rather it was a middling attempt to reduce the number of ten municipal jurisdictions to four, Algonquin Highlands, (combining Stanhope and Sherborne et al). Minden

Hills (bringing Snowdon and Lutterworth townships together with Anson, Hindon and Minden), Highlands East (which saw the individual townships of Monmouth, Glamorgan, Cardiff and Bicroft under one municipal government). For Dysart et al the area of jurisdiction was unchanged. The county maintained its upper tier responsibilities, and then there were four.

To the south, Victoria county's 13 municipalities were also forced to become one and, perhaps even more galling, had a new name, the City of Kawartha Lakes, thrust upon it. Similarly the Haliburton County School Board was pushed into a marriage with boards from Victoria County and Muskoka to create the Trillium Lakelands District School Board. Haliburton County was allowed to have its semi-amalgamation perhaps a sop to it being just too insignificant for the province to fret about.

The forced amalgamation of some of the smaller municipalities in Haliburton County, did not come without its objectors of course. Concerns about loss of autonomy, community identity obliterated, claims that neighbouring jurisdictions could never work together were heard. These perhaps softer excuses could not withstand the

pressure when the province asked for efficiencies, reduced costs, more robust community services. And so the amalgamations were forced through with province holding the ultimate levers of control and local politicians begrudgingly agreeing. Bigger is better won out.

I have long been a proponent of a single tier municipal structure for Haliburton County. While I hear and understand the arguments in opposition, I still believe a single tier will create opportunities, efficiencies and a co-ordinated approach to community development. The county is in the midst of a service delivery review, which I believe will point the way to further integration and transfer of responsibilities to the county level. Could the review boldly suggest that municipal services be folded into one jurisdiction?

The power to move that forward lies with the elected members of the councils. Without their support the idea will continue to be just that.

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Minden Legion Branch 636

Lunch - Monday to Friday

Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.

Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.

Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.

Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.

Friday Fish & Chips & Wings. Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.

Every other Friday Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.

Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.

Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541

Schedules are subject to change without notice. Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly

When: Monday mornings 9:30 to 11 a.m.

Where: Haliburton Legion Branch 129, upper level

Admission: Yearly membership of \$59
A non-profit/commercial network of weight-loss support groups, offers programs for healthy living and weight management.

Jr NBA

When: April 11 to May 31

Where: Archie Stouffer Elementary and Haliburton High School

Local volunteers and Basketball Canada have teamed up to bring a curriculum-based youth basketball program to the county! Visit www.haliburtonbasketball.com for information and to register.

Red Wolves Special Olympics Dinner Dance Fundraiser

When: Saturday, Apr. 15., Social at 5pm and Dinner at 6pm

Where: Haliburton Legion

Come dressed in your best western themed gear. Enjoy beef on a bun with all the fixin's, potato salad, coleslaw, and our famous homemade desserts. D.J. Ron Murphy, enjoy our photo booth, spot dances, Silent and country auctions, and 50/50 draw. Tickets are \$25 each and available at Up River Trading Company in Haliburton or Minden. Tickets are cash only in store - sorry no phone holds.

THE TOWNSHIP OF MINDEN HILLS IN SEASON, EVERY SEASON

Minden Hills Advisory Committees Call for Committee Members

Submission deadline for applications has been extended to March 31, 2023

The Township of Minden Hills is looking for volunteers to participate as members on the following Advisory Committees for the 2023-2026 term of Council:

Community Services Advisory Committee
Cultural Centre Advisory Committee
Events Advisory Committee
Lochlin Community Centre Advisory Committee
Irondale Community Centre Advisory Committee
Planning and Development Advisory Committee

If you, or someone you know, are interested in participating in any of the above committees, please submit a completed application form in person, by mail or email to:

Advisory Committee Applications
Clerk's Department,
Township of Minden Hills
7 Milne Street, PO Box 359
Minden, ON
K0M 2K0

sprentice@minderhills.ca

Application deadline is Friday, March 31, 2023, by 12:00 noon.

For an Application Form or for more information, please visit our website www.minderhills.ca
Local Government/Committees and Boards, or contact admin@minderhills.ca or call the Clerk's Department at 705-286-1260 ext. 512



Have a thought, comment or opinion you'd like to share?

Send a letter to the editor to emily@haliburtonpress.com



The Huskies kicked off game three of the series by welcoming young skaters to the ice.



A tough loss

Patrick Saini #75 celebrating after goal, making the score 2-0 for the Huskies on March 25 against the Wellington Dukes. Despite a hard-fought game, the Huskies lost 4-3 to the Dukes. /TIM YANO special to the Times



Christian Stevens #17 celebrates a goal, making it 3-1 for the Huskies against the Wellington Dukes.



Kayla Bird kick's off Sunday's acoustic coffee house.



Coffee with a side of jam

Lauren Phillips plays a song at SIRCH Bistro's acoustic coffee house on Sunday, Mar. 26 where local musicians came out and thumbed their way through a sunny afternoon. The non-formal from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. offered a place for those who wanted to jam and chat about music over coffee. /ADAM FRISK Special to the Times

Ontario wardens group launches affordable housing campaign

by JAMES MATTHEWS
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The lack of affordable housing is one of Haliburton County’s main concerns. And it’s a concern that’s shared by the other 13 members of the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus (EOWC), said Peter Emon, the group’s chairperson and warden at Renfrew County.

He told Haliburton County council March 22 that about 14,000 affordable community housing rental units are needed to clear wait lists throughout the eastern region.

And, he said, the average wait time for community housing is about five years for all types of housing units. That wait jumps to 10 years for some housing types.

“There is a chronic and serious supply problem of not only regular housing, but community or social housing across our region,” he said.

Affordable housing refers to housing with rents geared to a household’s income level. Some progress has been made to meet the housing needs over the years, he said. But, obviously, efforts have fallen short. That’s why the EOWC has put its collective resources and experiences into a new solution.

“It’s big and it’s definitely bold,” Emon said of the new initiative.

Jim Pine, the CAO of Hastings County, said improving the housing inventory re-

quires a collective effort. In his own jurisdiction, the wait list has ballooned to well over 3,000 families from about 2,800 in just a few months.

“The challenge continues to grow in terms of people looking for a place that they can call home, that they can afford,” Pine said. “With a long wait list, the challenge really speaks to the need for us to do something bold.

“If not us, then who is going to work on this challenge?”

The provincial government has a goal to build 1.5-million new homes by 2031. The EOWC has launched an initiative dubbed the 7-in-7 regional housing plan. That’s a plan to deliver 7,000 new affordable rental units over seven years.

“We think that the focus of Ontario’s effort is generally on housing ownership,” Pine said. “We didn’t want the sector of rental to be left out in terms of trying to find a solution.

“We want to be part of the provincial initiative, and we want to do this by working on the rental side in terms of affordable housing.”

No government can fix the problem alone. The 7-in-7 campaign provides an opportunity to collaborate with the private sector.

“Evidence shows us that, typically, when we can incent one RGI unit (rent geared to income) to be built, the private sector will come and build three of their own at market

rate rent,” Pine said.

So, in effect, 21,000 gets added to the 7,000 built through the campaign. And 28,000 households get roofs. An estimated \$3.1 billion investment to provide 7,000 housing units generates \$9 billion of economic activity.

“We think it is the perfect private-public partnership that we are proposing,” he said.

The federal and provincial governments need to invest more into meeting the snow-balling need for affordable housing and, further, to help cover the operating costs of social housing.

“It shouldn’t be all done on the backs of property tax payers in our local municipalities,” Pine said. “Ontario is the only jurisdiction in the country where housing is a local responsibility.”

Everywhere else, the provincial and territorial governments are responsible.

“We have a special need in Ontario, and we need the support of all three levels of government,” he said. “We all need to come

together in this effort.”

Under the plan, Haliburton County could get 490 housing units at a cost of \$198-million. What’s more, Pine said there’s a potential the regional economy could be driven forward for years afterwards.

“We know we can do this because we have expertise working on big projects,” Pine said.

The caucus hopes to have a business case completed by this summer to use as a tool to lure government support. Consultations with Indigenous groups and the private and non-profit sectors will kick off in the summer so that requests for proposals can be issued in the fall.

“It’s ambitious but, as I said at the beginning, if not us, then who is going to do this?” he said.

Federal and provincial politicians have said time and again that they’re focused on fixing housing problems. Warden Liz Danielsen, the mayor of Algonquin Highlands, said supporting this plan may be the nudge those decision-makers need.

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3		8		5	9			4
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Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 14

Interact, Rotaract, and Rotary add colour to international fundraiser

by VIVIAN COLLINGS
Times Staff

It’s time for the third-annual fundraiser between Interact, Rotaract, and the Haliburton and Minden Rotary clubs to brighten the Highlands with a Canadian-themed colouring book, and they need your drawings to make it come to life.

Spearheaded by Haliburton Highlands Secondary School Interact students, the three service clubs under the umbrella of Rotary International have been supporting a school in India called the Mahatma Gandhi Siksha Sadan School by sending proceeds from their annual fundraiser to help provide much-needed supplies.

“When Interact was coming up with a world-wide initiative to tackle for this year, we decided that we wanted to support the school in India again as we have developed a friendship with them, they continue to be in great need, and we can help,” said Interact member Annabelle Borgdorff.

The HHSS student said the club’s dream is to one day meet the students at the school in India, but in the meantime, they hope to send monetary support across the water by putting together a colouring book to be sold.

Along with students’ drawings, they would like community members to submit drawings

of Canadian-themed artwork to be part of the book.

“We just thought [the colouring books] would be a creative, new way to fundraise and to showcase local talent,” Annabelle said.

The clubs saw success with selling a cookbook of favourite recipes from members of all three clubs the first year and two different puzzles the second year; one featuring local scenery and one of a mural in the high school.

“We are holding a contest where people can submit their Canadian-themed artwork to be put in the adult colouring book that will be produced and sold to fundraise for the school in India. We are hoping to have involvement from students at HHSS, adults in the community, as well as students in Grade 8 from our family of schools,” Annabelle said.

To enter the contest, submissions must be black line drawings on 8.5” by 11” white paper, and they must be Canadian-themed. Digital drawing are accepted.

All submissions can be dropped off in-person at the HHSS main office or sent to christine.carr@tldsb.on.ca.

Name and contact information must be included, and the date for final submissions is April 6.

“We plan to have the colouring books fully put together by early May,” Annabelle said.

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Invasive pests should be our biggest concern, says HFWR director

by VIVIAN COLLINGS
Times Staff

If we don't prioritize invasive species as a problem, we may not have an environment left to be worried about.

Invasive pests should be at the top of our list of concerns as Ontarians, said Malcolm Cockwell, managing director at Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve and president of Forests Ontario.

"You've got to make sure there's an environment to protect in the first place," Cockwell said. "If you're worried about climate change, you need to be worried about this. This is going to be the defining environmental issue for the next 100 years. If we don't prioritize invasive pests, there will be no environment."

He said no matter who you are or how you enjoy the Highlands, you should be concerned about invasive pests.

"Obviously, I am looking at it through the lens of a forester and a forest manager, but different people would prioritize different invasive pests," Cockwell said. "Recreationalists would probably be really concerned about Giant Hogweed or possibly Garlic Mustard or Purple Loosestrife. Waterfront owners would probably be concerned about something called Spiny Waterflea, Japanese Knotweed, or another aquatic pest that's likely to come in."

Either way, he said, there's no shortage of pests to be concerned about on a recreational level and by the affect it will have on our beloved ecosystem.

There's also no easy way to address invasive species.

Back in December, Dysart council heard a proposal to eradicate the five known patches of Giant Hogweed in the municipality; a weed that produces sap which can cause severe burns on skin that comes in contact with sunlight.

Total eradication would take multiple years and \$55,000 and was a debate council decided to defer until the budget was settled.

Cockwell highlighted the two invasive species he is most concerned about as a forester.

"The big one that's already here is Beech Bark Disease. Once it's fully run its course, it will probably have killed 10 to 15 per cent of the trees in Haliburton County. That's a massive impact from that one alone. It's already halfway done doing its damage in Haliburton County."

As stated by the government of Ontario, Beech Bark Disease is a combination of beech scale insects and a canker fungus that together "cause severe cankering, deformation of the stem, and eventually tree mortality."

The insects make punctures in beech tree bark, allowing for fungal spores to enter the tree. The fungus usually kills a large beech tree within 10 years.

Cockwell said their are two main effects of Beech Bark Disease that are of concern.

The first is that the disease will kill the majority of beech trees in the area.

"That's concerning because beech is an important tree. They're common, they're everywhere, and trees are sequestering carbon, generating oxygen, and all kinds of good things, so inherently it's bad if they die, but it's particularly problematic because beech is the biggest producer of mast in forests around here, and mast is food that animals eat," Cockwell said.

Mast is the fruit, nuts, and seeds produced by trees.

"Beech produces beech nuts that humans can eat too, but at



While Beech Bark Disease may make the tree look unique, it can be deadly if it spreads across the forest. / Photo credit to Haliburton Forest

various times of year, beech nuts can account for the majority of caloric intake for some animals including bears. If you start to think through the repercussions of the death of the beech and the loss of the mast, then you've taken away half of the food of the bears at certain times of year. What's going to end up happening? Human and bear conflict, among other issues."

Cockwell said nothing can be done about this problem and that he thinks beech will never be a commercial species in Ontario.

However, the second issue with the presence of Beech Bark Disease can be addressed.

The second problem will likely start five years in the future.

"Beech tends to reproduce vegetatively as opposed to sexually, so most of the beech saplings that you see in the forest did not grow from a seed. They grow as a root sucker from the roots of another tree, so they're clones of each other basically."

Cockwell said this in itself is not a problem.

"The problem is that when you have a huge mortality event among beech, they get stressed. When they get stressed, they will reproduce, so they will send up lots and lots of root suckers into the forest. What you end up with is a huge amount of little beech saplings being created in the forest which prevents other trees from growing, so it reduces diversity, and then those little beech saplings are destined to die before they become trees because they will get beech Bark Disease."

Cockwell said this results in the formation of beech thickets that are a dead area where nothing else can grow.

"They are essentially a desert."

Like many invasive species now present in Ontario, Beech Bark Disease originates in Europe, but he said the insect-fungus complex is not harmful to European beech trees because they are a slightly different species.

"The problem is that here, the beech did not evolve with this, so they are very susceptible and there is no protection against it."

To help this issue, Cockwell said harvesting methods that can encourage the growth of other tree species on top of beech can be successful. But even these solutions have some downsides.

"It's not pretty because it often involved doing a hardwood clear cut, but in doing a clear cut, you're able to get other species like maple, cherry, ash, and oak to grow back," he said.

Cockwell said the second way to prevent the long term impact is with herbicides which would kill all beech tree suckers which allows other species to become established.

Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve has experimented with both and has had success.

The second invasive species Cockwell is most concerned about is an insect called Hemlock Woolly Adelgid.

"That one's not here yet, but it likely will be soon. It's been noted in Southern Ontario, and if it gets established here, it will kill virtually all of Hemlock, which would represent another ten per cent of our forests. It would be particularly bad because the habitat types where Hemlock occurs are very sensitive and very important to most wildlife; birds and ungulates in particular," Cockwell said.

He said although the subject is disheartening because there are no easy solutions, and sometimes there are no solutions at all, he hopes invasive pests will come to the forefront of environmental concerns.

"Nobody likes to talk about invasive pests because it's a nasty subject. There's no heroes in the world of invasive species. We need to get over that as a society. Everybody needs to realize that this is going to affect everyone in a major way, and the impact will be shared by everybody," he said.

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Spring beauties

Spring couldn't come early enough for the ladies attending the Sweep Into Spring Bonspiel at the Minden Curling Club, so they chose to have a little fun to lighten winter's weary load. As part of the post-curling entertainment, a number of men agreed to be models for a make-up make-over. However, in this case, the beauticians were cloaked in a sheet and worked from behind their victims. Nearing the end of their transition to startling beauties and enjoying the process as much as their audience are from the left, Peter McNeilage, Joe Larocca, Jack Taylor and Todd Grainger. Unseen, but just as stunning, was participant Bob McConnell.

Haliburton County may have its own radio station



David Sovereign

by Matthew Sitrler

It'll be a little bit country and a little bit rock 'n' roll. Plans to establish Haliburton County's first community radio station are underway and, pending CRTC approval, could be coming to you over the airways in a matter of months.

Former Broadcaster and Haliburton Lake resident, Dave Sovereign, is spearheading the radio station proposal and is hoping to hear positive feedback from any area groups who are interested in helping with the project. The goal would be to broadcast to every corner of the County, he says, and to produce quality programming

with help from volunteers.

"I was at the curling club earlier this year and a fellow by the name of Don Cameron said to me 'why can't we have a radio station in Haliburton?' My reaction was 'I suppose we could.'"

Sovereign, who has lived in Haliburton for the past three years and has cottaged at his parents' here since 1957, notes that the county may be small, population-wise, but he believes his community-based radio station idea will definitely catch on.

"There are a number of them in Quebec, a few in Ontario and some in Western Canada," he explains. "The idea would be to create it as a non-

profit community station that is staffed by volunteers from the area." Sovereign says, based on research he has conducted since last November and December, with the added momentum the project has gained since January, the word has spread rapidly. "It did get to Dysart Council last week," he says. "Everywhere we go, we seem to feel an enthusiasm. People think it is a great idea and that it should be done."

One of the first people Sovereign went to see was Haliburton County Warden Murray Fearrey. "I think he is a fairly well respected person up here

(more on page 8)

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KENNISIS RIVER - \$697,000

Fabulous year-round home or cottage with a spacious level lot. Boat the river into Halls Lake. Three bedrooms, vaulted ceiling and large picture windows facing the river. This home has been lovingly maintained and won't disappoint. Large one-car garage, quiet community and close to boat launches and snowmobile trails.

Terry Carr & Drew Staniforth
Sales Representatives
705-935-1011
MovingTheHighlands.com



This 2.348 acre parcel with 251' of year round township maintained road frontage has everything you look for in a vacant lot with great options for building sites. The lot is quite scenic with large mature hardwoods but very little underbrush so you can see through the forest quite clearly. Another bonus 100 yards or so away is the HCSA groomed snowmobile trail!



Vince Duchene

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